Atty. Dkt. No. 046262-0143

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-12. (Cancelled)

13. (New)   A sound-volume controlling method of controlling sound volume per step, the sound-volume controlling method comprising:

specifying a step zone in which a volume change amount per step is to be changed;

changing a first volume change amount per step in specified step zone to obtain a second volume change amount per step without a change in total number of steps; and

controlling sound volume based on the second volume change amount, wherein

the changing includes changing the first volume change amount in the specified step zone to be less than a default value, and changing a volume change amount per step in at least one step zone other than the specified step zone to be more than the default value to maintain the total number of steps, and

the specifying includes specifying an arbitrary width of the step zone in a range of the total number of steps.

14. (New)   The sound-volume controlling method according to claim 13, wherein the changing includes changing a volume change amount per step to be uniform in all step zones except for the specified step zone.

15. (New)   The sound-volume controlling method according to claim 13, wherein the changing includes changing a volume change amount per step to be different in all step zones except for the specified step zone.

16. (New)   The sound-volume controlling method according to claim 13, wherein
the specifying includes specifying an entire step zone, and

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the changing includes changing a volume change amount per step in the entire step zone.

17. (New)   A sound-volume controller that controls sound volume per step, the sound-volume controller comprising:

a zone specifying unit that specifies a step zone in which a volume change amount per step is to be changed;

a changing unit that changes a first volume change amount per step in specified step zone to obtain a second volume change amount per step without a change in total number of steps; and

a controlling unit that controls sound volume based on the second volume change amount, wherein

the changing unit changes the first volume change amount in the specified step zone to be less than a default value, and changes a volume change amount per step in at least one step zone other than the specified step zone to be more than the default value to maintain the total number of steps, and

the zone specifying unit specifies an arbitrary width of the step zone in a range of the total number of steps.

18. (New)   The sound-volume controller according to claim 17, further comprising a storage unit that stores therein a pattern of a volume change amount per step as a volume control curve, wherein

the changing unit changes the volume change amount per step based on the volume control curve.

19. (New)   Electronic equipment comprising a sound-volume controller that controls sound volume per step, wherein the sound-volume controller includes

a zone specifying unit that specifies a step zone in which a volume change amount per step is to be changed;

a changing unit that changes a first volume change amount per step in specified step zone to obtain a second volume change amount per step without a change in total number of steps; and

a controlling unit that controls sound volume based on the second volume change amount,

the changing unit changes the first volume change amount in the specified step zone to be less than a default value, and changes a volume change amount per step in at least one step zone other than the specified step zone to be more than the default value to maintain the total number of steps, and

the zone specifying unit specifies an arbitrary width of the step zone in a range of the total number of steps.

20. (New)   The electronic equipment according to claim 19, wherein

the sound-volume controller further includes a storage unit that stores therein a pattern of a volume change amount per step as a volume control curve, and

the changing unit changes the volume change amount per step based on the volume control curve.

21. (New)   A computer-readable recording medium that stores therein a computer program for controlling sound volume per step, the computer program causing a computer to execute:

specifying a step zone in which a volume change amount per step is to be changed;

changing a first volume change amount per step in specified step zone to obtain a second volume change amount per step without a change in total number of steps; and

controlling sound volume based on the second volume change amount, wherein

the changing includes changing the first volume change amount in the specified step zone to be less than a default value, and changing a volume change amount per step in at least one step zone other than the specified step zone to be more than the default value to maintain the total number of steps, and

the specifying includes specifying an arbitrary width of the step zone in a range of the total number of steps.

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